

# CHANDAMAMA

NOVEMBER 1985

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Turn to Page 11  
for 'STORY OF  
RAMA'



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## NEXT ISSUE

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- *The story, through pictures, of the Deity and the temple at Kalighat in Calcutta.*
- *A few puffs of laughter through a picture-story.*
- *A bunch of fascinating tales.*
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### Thoughts to be Treasured

The man who says that he will work only when the world has become perfect, and then he will enjoy bliss, is as likely to succeed as a man who sits beside a river and says: 'I shall cross when all the water has run into the ocean.'

—Swami Vivekananda

Printed by B.V. REDDI at Prasad Process Private Ltd., 188 N.S.K. Salai, Madras 600 026 (India) and published by B. VISWANATHA REDDI on behalf of CHANDAMAMA PUBLICATIONS, Chandamama Buildings, Vadapalani, Madras 600 026 (India). The stories, articles and designs contained herein are the exclusive property of the publishers and copying or adapting them in any manner will be dealt with according to law.

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Know and More!**





## CHANDAMAMA

Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

Founder: CHAKRAPANI

### BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR MAGAZINE

We receive numerous letters from our readers expressing joy at the content of *Chandamama*. "For twelve years now I have not missed reading or treasuring a single issue of *Chandamama*. The habit has helped me to grow up by more than twelve years; at the same time it has helped me to remain younger by twelve years! I do not think I will ever give up this habit. Sometimes I open the old volumes and read some of the stories I had read years ago. The kind of joy they give me can be termed as the joy of innocence. Where else can I turn for such joys?"

Another reader writes, "Features like *Let us Know*, *Did You Know?*, *Towards Better English*, and that invaluable pictorial series on India (*Story of India*, *Rivers of India* and now *Temples of India*), combined with a number of stories, make *Chandamama* a unique publication."

Surely, these are highly encouraging comments and your magazine will never stop striving to serve you in this unique way.

### GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

आमरणान्ताः प्रणयाः कोपास्तत्क्षणमङ्गुराः ।

परित्यागाच्च निःसङ्गा भवन्ति हि महात्मनाम् ॥

*Āmarāntāḥ praṇayāḥ kopāstatkṣaṇaṅgurāḥ*

*Parityāgāśca niḥsaṅgābhavnti hi mahātmanām*

Life-long is the love of the noble souls, while their anger is momentary. The sacrifice they make for others are motiveless.

*The Hitopadeshah*



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# NEWS FLASH

## Tracing the Titanic



In the early hours of April 15, 1912, the world's largest ship of the time, *Titanic*, sank, drowning 1,513 passengers out of 2,224. The strong ship had been out on its maiden voyage. The accident was least expected. It is believed to have collided with a huge iceberg.

Now a U.S. research vessel has located the ship which rests almost intact two and half miles under the water, on the North Atlantic Ocean floor.

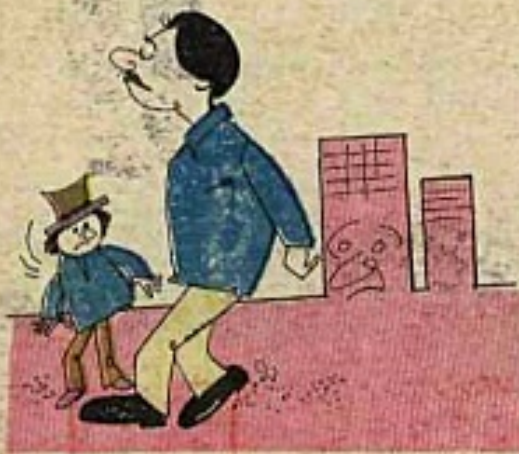
## A Diamond named Samantha

An American school girl, Samantha, wrote to the Russian leaders a letter appealing to them that they should work for world peace. For her touching sentiments she was invited to the Soviet Union in 1983. Samantha died in a plane crash in August '85. A Siberian diamond of rare beauty has now been named after her by the workers of Soviet Union's biggest diamond mine. The diamond will remain in Kremlin's diamond collection.



## The Walking Mountain!

You can call him a mountain among men. Alan Channa, the world's tallest man, caused a traffic jam when he walked down New York's Fifth Avenue and lunch-time crowd milled around him. Channa, a Pakistani, is eight feet and three inches tall. Dazed Americans jostled to shake hands with the 400 pound Channa as the TV crew went on filming the event. A six-foot basket ball player said, "Till today I thought that I was quite tall!"





## DID YOU KNOW?



The base of the Great Pyramid near Cairo is large enough to cover ten football fields. Herodotus, the Greek historian, says that 400,000 men worked for twenty years to complete the monument.

Ninety per cent of all the species that have completely perished were birds, the most famous of them being the dodo of Mauritius, extinct in the 17th century.



A monarch to reign for the shortest time was King Louis XIX of France. He was the king for fifteen minutes on August 2, 1830 before he abdicated in favour of Henri V

Longevity of dinosaurs was more than a hundred years.



One can see the stars during the day from the bottom of a well.

The word *Robot* (a mechanical 'man') was coined by the Czech dramatist Karel Capen in a play called *R.U.R.*





## STORY OF

# RAMA



—By Manoj Das

(A bandit accustomed to plunder travellers is one day confronted by Sage Narada who asks him if he was aware of the sin he was gathering. The bandit who was under the impression that his sin will be shared by his wife and children is soon disillusioned. He falls at the sage's feet, full of sorrow and repentance.)

### THE SAGE FROM THE ANT-HILLS

No other day had been so meaningful to Ratnakara as the day he met Sage Narada. Ratnakara was weeping uncontrollably. Faces were coming crowding into his memory—faces of people he had plundered, maimed or killed. Those tearful eyes now seemed to set

fire to his heart; those terror-stricken faces now began to terrify him.

“O Sage, do you believe that I can ever be relieved of the burden of my sin? Till a moment ago I was not conscious of what I was doing. No doubt I was a brute, but ignorance was my





bliss. You woke me up, but should you abandon me in this condition, when I am suffering the pangs of hell?" he asked the sage entreatingly.

"You had to wake up sooner or later. The pangs of hell you are suffering now are of your own making. But you can surely come out of them if you so will," said the sage.

"How?" asked Ratnakara.

"By taking refuge in the Lord. Think of him alone and utter his name non-stop," advised the sage.

"Please give me the name!"

"The Lord has just taken birth as a human being. Rama is the name by which he is known.

That should be the most auspicious name for you to respect. Come on, say Rama, Rama!"

Ratnakara tried to utter the name, but his tongue got tied; he fumbled. He wept bitterly over his failure.

"Don't lose hope. I assure you, your repentance for your deeds, your determination to change yourself and, last but not the least, your devotion to the Lord can do miracles. Now, look at that tree there. What is its condition?" asked the sage.

"*Mara*. It is dead."

"Repeat the word *Mara*," advised the sage. Ratnakara began doing so. Soon he was able to utter Rama. A radiant





change came over his face. Tears still flowed down his cheeks, but now they were tears of gratitude. He knelt down and touched the sage's feet. "My guru," he said, "the magic word you gave me clings to my tongue. Like a drop of nectar, it washes the poison off my mind, the poison of my own sin."

"Fine. You won't like to forget the name, I presume!"

"O my saviour, I cannot refrain from reciting the name. I feel as if my whole body will fall into pieces if I take my mind off Rama even for a second! What should I do?"

"Remain lost in that name. There is nothing better to do than that," said the sage.

Ratnakara sat down under a bushy tree.

"We'll meet again," said Narada as he smiled at his new disciple. But by then Ratnakara had become so absorbed in muttering the name of Rama and concentrating on the Lord that he hardly knew about the sage's departure.

Narada moved away, listening with satisfaction to Ratnakara's mutterings.

Quiet was that area of the forest but for the subdued drone



of Ratnakara. Birds in the trees around him listened to him and fell silent, as if thinking it best to leave him undisturbed. A few parrots picked up the word Ratnakara repeated and carried the word 'Rama' to other parts of the forest. Big beasts like elephants, lions and tigers behaved themselves if they happened to be in that area. There was something so serene in the atmosphere that they did not feel like trumpeting or roaring or fighting.

We do not know how many years passed but when Sage Narada visited the place once again, he could at once feel the



change in the atmosphere and he knew what caused it. He looked for Ratnakara.

It took some time for him to locate Ratnakara, for, over the years, a number of ant-hills and grown around him, hiding him from the sight of animals and men. Narada demolished a few ant-hills. Slowly he woke Ratnakara up from his trance and held him by the hand. The Ratnakara that came out into the open was not the Ratnakara whom the sage had left the tree. Meditation on Rama had transformed the bandit into a Rishi, a seer. He was to be known thereafter as Sage Valmiki—the one to emerge from 'Valmika' or the

ant-hills.

Valmiki prostrated himself to his spiritual mentor, Narada. Both spent some time together. The years Valmiki had spent in trance were not years of forgetfulness, but a time of great spiritual experiences. He had much to ask Narada and Narada had much to explain to him.

Narada left Valmiki on the bank of the sweet river, Tamasa, that flowed through the Dandakaranya. Valmiki built a small hermitage for himself and lived in tranquillity.

But he was destined to do momentous things.

One day, while returning to his hut after a bath in the river,





he was amused to see two frolicsome birds whistling and playing with each other. Suddenly an arrow whizzed past him and struck one of the birds. Down it came from its branch, its tiny wings flapping desperately. Stunned for a moment, the other bird gave out cries of anguish.

Valmiki was deeply moved. He felt a great pity for the bird; at the same time he grew extremely indignant with the hunter who was heading to pick up his prey while the other bird circled over his head.

"O you hunter, you who could so cruelly kill one bird from a playful pair, shall never

find for yourself any honourable place on the earth!" uttered the sage.

Soon it dawned upon him that the way he gave vent to his disgust had a style about it. He knew that he had hit upon a form of expression that was entirely new, a form in which things sublime can be said. For some time past he was feeling a vague urge to formulate a new pattern of speech. It had come forth spontaneously.

This was the beginning of poetry.

What Valmiki had uttered was the first ever verse. He was to follow the style to compose the great epic, the Ramayana.







## THE TWO TRAVELLING FROGS

shall be respected as the most widely travelled frog of Purvapur."

So he started on a journey.

Almost at the same moment the ambitious frog of Pashchinpur thought the same way and he started for Purvapur.

Since both must cross the hill in order to reach their destinations, they climbed it from opposite sides and came face to face atop the hill.

"Who are you and where are you going?" asked the frog from Purvapur.

"I'm from Pashchinpur, out to survey Purvapur. What about you?"

"I'm from Purvapur, out to survey Pashchinpur. Nice meeting you. Tell me something about your town."

They were happy in each other's company. They relaxed under a tree and talked of many things.

"Only if we were a little more tall, I could see your town and you could see mine from here. It

To the east of the hill was a small town named Purvapur and to the west was another, named Pashchinpur. In both the towns lived princes and noblemen and merchants and commonmen and horses and cats. And both the towns had hundreds of frogs, living in their ponds and wells.

But Purvapur had a very ambitious frog and so had Pashchinpur.

One day the ambitious frog of Purvapur said to himself: "I understand that behind the hill there is a town. I hear people talking of it. Only if I could pay a visit to that town and return, I



would not be necessary for us to take the trouble of visiting the places," said the frog from Purvapur.

"I have an idea. If we stand on our hind legs, supporting each other, yourself facing at Purvapur and myself facing Pashchinpur, we can survey each other's town right from this spot!" said the other frog.

The idea appealed to the first frog. Both stood up on their hind legs, their forelegs resting on each other's shoulders. Intently they looked at the towns below the hill.

"Good God, your Pashchinpur looks exactly like my Purvapur!" exclaimed the frog from Purvapur.

"I've the same thing to say. Your Purvapur looks exactly like my Pashchinpur!" said the

frog from Pashchinpur.

"How funny!" they said and they agreed that it was useless going ahead with their tour programmes. They parted, each turning towards his own home.

The tree that stood over them and heard them and saw them, laughed and shouted at them, saying, "Look here, you frogs, although you were facing each other, your eyes being on your heads, each saw his own town. You, the frog from Purvapur! Your nose was towards Pashchinpur, but your eyes were set on Purvapur. And you, the frog from Pashchinpur! You too saw your own town for the same reason!"

But the frogs did not understand the language of the tree.





# AS A FARMER ...

One Sunday the new priest of the small town church saw that only one farmer from a nearby village had turned up for the mass. He was disappointed, for he had expected a good audience and had prepared a talk accordingly. Now he was reluctant to deliver such a precious talk to a mere farmer.

"I see, you are the only listener. Should I go on with my talk? What do you say?" asked the priest.

"Well, Father, as a farmer I can tell you that if I go to my cattle-shed with a lot of fodder but find only one cow there, I feed it, nevertheless!" said the farmer.

That helped the priest to make up his mind. He went on with his long lecture.

At last when he finished and looked at the farmer, he did not find the farmer too pleased.

"How do you like my discourse?" he asked.

"Well, Father, as a farmer I can tell you that if I go to my cattle-shed with a lot of fodder and find only one cow, I do not compel the single cow to eat the whole lot!" replied the farmer as he went out.





# Oliver Twist



Oliver has been rescued from Fagin and Bill Sikes by Miss Rose and her aunt, Mrs. Maylie. They go to seek out Mr. Brownlow, who knows something of Oliver's background, only to find that he has left for the West Indies.



At last Oliver was well enough to visit Mr. Brownlow, from whose comfortable home he had been snatched by Bill Sikes, and with this idea in mind, he set off one morning in the company of the doctor. When the coach finally turned into the street where Mr. Brownlow resided, Oliver could feel his heart beating so wildly that he could hardly breathe.



The coach stopped and Oliver stepped out with tears of happy expectation coming down his cheeks. Alas! The house was empty, and there was a bill in the window. 'To Let'. Further enquiries next door brought forth the information that Mr. Brownlow had gone to the West Indies six weeks before.

A fortnight later, Rose and Mrs. Maylie left for the country, taking Oliver with them. Who can describe Oliver's delight at the sight of the rose-and-honey suckle-covered cottage, where they were going to stay, so different from the mean and sordid buildings in which he had lived so much of his young life.







The days that Oliver spent there were peaceful and serene. Every morning, he went to a white-bearded old gentleman who taught him to read better and to write. In the evenings, Rose would sit down at the piano and play some pleasant air, while Oliver sat listening to the sweet music

On Sunday, they all went to the little church where birds sang in the trees. In the afternoon, Oliver would roam the fields, plundering the hedges for wild flowers for Miss Rose. In this manner, the months glided by happily.



In the middle of the summer, Oliver's happiness experienced a sudden check, when Rose suddenly collapsed one evening over the piano.





Mrs. Maylie put Rose to bed immediately and in due course, the doctor arrived. "It is hard," the doctor said, when he came downstairs. "So young, so much beloved, but there is very little hope." On hearing these words, Oliver crept away to the churchyard, where he sank on his knees and prayed for Rose among the green mounds.

A knell from the church bell harshly broke the silence. As it began tolling, a group of mourners entered the gate, following the coffin to an uncovered grave. This sight served to bring home even more to Oliver the fact that soon he might well be attending a similar funeral.



But the fates were already relenting, for when Oliver returned to the cottage, it was to learn that Rose had taken a turn for the better, and the doctor had every hope that she would soon recover.





Later that day, Oliver retired to the room where he was accustomed to doing his homework. Outside the window were clusters of honeysuckle that crept over the casement and filled the room with their delicious perfume. And there, Oliver sat concentrated upon his books.



As the first shades of twilight began to settle upon the earth, Oliver started to nod over his books. Presently, he slept and while he slept he dreamed of Fagin, and of those terrible days when he was held prisoner in that dark room somewhere in the slums of London.

Oliver suddenly awoke from his dream with a start and there at the window was Fagin himself. Beside him was another man he had not seen before. They were there but for an instant, and then they were gone.

—To Continue





## WHAT CAUSES DEATH?

A poor Brahmin and his wife had just entered the kingdom of Madura ruled by the pious Pandya King, Ananthaguna.

"Let us rest for a while under this banyan tree. The city is not far. We can be there before it is evening," the Brahmin told his wife.

"I'm not only tired, but also thirsty," said the woman. The Brahmin asked her to wait there and himself went into the nearby village to fetch water.

But what should he see when he comes back! His wife lay dead, struck by an arrow on her neck!

Who could have done this? Why? With great sorrow and

anger he looked in all directions. Soon his eyes fell on a hunter, equipped with a bow and a quiver of arrows, walking at some distance.

"Halt, you brute!" shouted the Brahmin. Then he ran and caught hold of the hunter. "Why did you kill my wife?" he demanded to know.

"Kill your wife? Why on earth should I do such a thing? I have never harmed a human being all my life!" said the hunter.

The Brahmin shouted for the villagers to come there. They did and listened to the Brahmin's complaint. There was no other person with a bow and arrow anywhere in that







field. Naturally, they were sure that the crime had been committed by the hunter.

But the hunter's strong denial surprised them. Also, they failed to determine what could be the hunter's motive for committing the murder.

They led the Brahmin and the hunter to the king and arranged for the woman's dead body to follow them in a cart.

The Brahmin cried so loudly in front of the court that the king rushed out to see what the matter was. The leading villagers narrated the incident to him. The king examined the dead body himself. There was

no doubt of the woman having been killed by an arrow. And according to the evidence of the villagers, there was no other man with a bow present in the vicinity of the banyan tree at the time of the woman's death. Hence, it must have been the hunter who killed the woman. Yet, the king was not sure of the man's guilt.

He detained the hunter and ordered for the cremation of the dead body. At night he went into the temple, all alone, and ardently prayed to God to let him know the truth. When he fell asleep, a calm voice told him, "Put on a disguise and visit the northern-most house in the town in the morning and find the answer to your query. Take the Brahmin with you."

So, when it was morning the king put on a disguise and visited the northern-most house in the town, accompanied by the Brahmin. A festival was going on in the house. Gifted with a supernatural vision for the time being, the king and the Brahmin saw some strange beings standing in a corner of the house. They were invisible to others. From their conversation the king and the Brahmin under-



stood that they were messengers of Death.

"How can we carry this man who is so hale and hearty?" asked one of the messengers, pointing at the chief of the house, a jolly and active man, busily managing a ceremony.

"Since it is time for him to depart, any plan will do. Don't you know how we separated that Brahmin woman's life from her body yesterday?" said another messenger.

"No, I don't know. How did you do that?"

"She sat under a tree. An arrow had remained stuck to an old branch of the tree for a long time. We made a gust of wind break the branch. It fell with force on the woman. The arrow pierced the woman's neck, under the pressure of the branch. Then the branch rolled

away, detached from the arrow. All was over in a moment!" said the first messenger. "Similarly, as soon as this man goes out to the backyard of the house, let us inspire that bull yonder to rush upon the man and gore him to death. People will think that the sound of drums maddened the bull!" the being said further.

The others agreed. Within the next two minutes everything happened as they had planned. The festival became an occasion for mourning. The disguised king and the Brahmin came out of the house—both wiser.

"My lord, what seems to be the cause of one's death is hardly the real cause!" said the Brahmin.

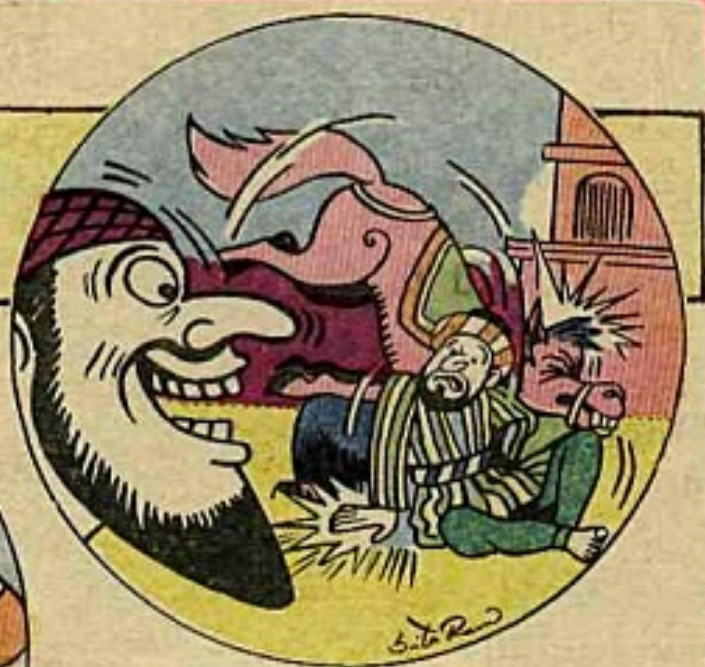
"Yes, my friend. The real cause is something else!" agreed the king.





## TWO FACES

The Amir, riding past a poor Arab's hut, fell off his horse as the animal stumbled over a rock.



"I saw your face and fell off the horse. Your face brought me ill luck! You should be hanged!" shouted the Amir.

"Sir, before you hang me I'll proclaim to the world of the truth: by seeing my face you only suffered a fall. By seeing yours, I'm going to die!" said the poor man.



Without a word the Amir got onto his horse. "Have a good day, clever chap!" he said and rode away.







## IT IS IN HUMAN NATURE

**I**t was the coldest winter night at Rampur. Howling wind blew through the town forcing everyone to remain indoors. The streets were totally deserted and the place looked like a ghost town.

Sukhdev, a wealthy merchant of the town, could not stand the bitter cold. His old and worn-out body shivered and he soon took to bed with a very high fever. An hour later, his wife, Janaki, called their son and said gravely, "Charandas, your father's condition is very serious. Go and call a doctor immediately."

Charandas was in a fix. He was most unwilling to brave the chilly night, but at the same time he had to save his father. What to do? Suddenly, he had an idea: why not send the servant to call the doctor?

But the servant too was not ready to face the piercing cold. However, he had to obey his young master's command.

Just as he opened the door for going out, the servant saw a man at the door, standing only in a loin-cloth. He had a bowl in his hand. The servant was amazed.

"Babu, now our master will not require a doctor. There's a sadhu standing outside the house. I'm sure he can cure the master," he informed Charandas excitedly.

Charandas opened the door wide to call in the sadhu.

"Sir, I'm a poor man. I'm dying of hunger. Please give me a morsel of food," said the man at the door.

"I'm ready to give you food if you can cure my ailing father," said Charandas.





"Sir, I'm only a beggar and I've no power to cure anybody. I pray to you to give me some food and save me from dying," said the beggar.

"In that case, you'll have to do some work for me before I give you food," bargained Charandas. He then went into his house and wrote a note to the doctor. Handing it over to the beggar, he told him to give it to the doctor and to return with the medicine that the doctor would give him.

When Charandas told about the beggar and his unbelievable capacity to withstand the biting cold, the inmates of the house

were stunned. One of them said, "The fellow must be having some magic powers!" Another one said, "He must have the knowledge of some secret herbs and roots which makes the body immune to cold and heat."

While they were talking, the beggar returned with the medicine.

Sukhdev took the medicine and soon felt better and went to sleep. His wife happily gave the beggar some food.

"What is your name?" Janaki asked the beggar when the latter thanked her for the meal.

"I'm called Gopal, mother," replied the beggar in a humble tone.

"Do you know to milk the cows?" asked Janaki.

"Yes, mother."

"Will you please milk the cows that are in the cowshed? As it is a very cold night, the woman who does it for us has not turned up," said Janaki.

"I'll do it for you, mother," said Gopal and he went out into the cowshed.

Soon he was back with a bucketful of milk. Janaki was very happy with Gopal. He was not only good-hearted but also



pretty efficient in his work.

"Gopal, where will you go at this late hour of the night? Why don't you sleep here on the verandah?" she said.

"Mother, I'll be glad to sleep here. Can you please give me a bedspread to cover myself?" said Gopal, very much pleased.

"You can take it from the servant's room which is at the back of our house," she said, handing over a key to Gopal.

Gopal had hardly taken ten steps when he came back running into the house and told Janaki, "Mother, it is extremely cold outside. How to go?"

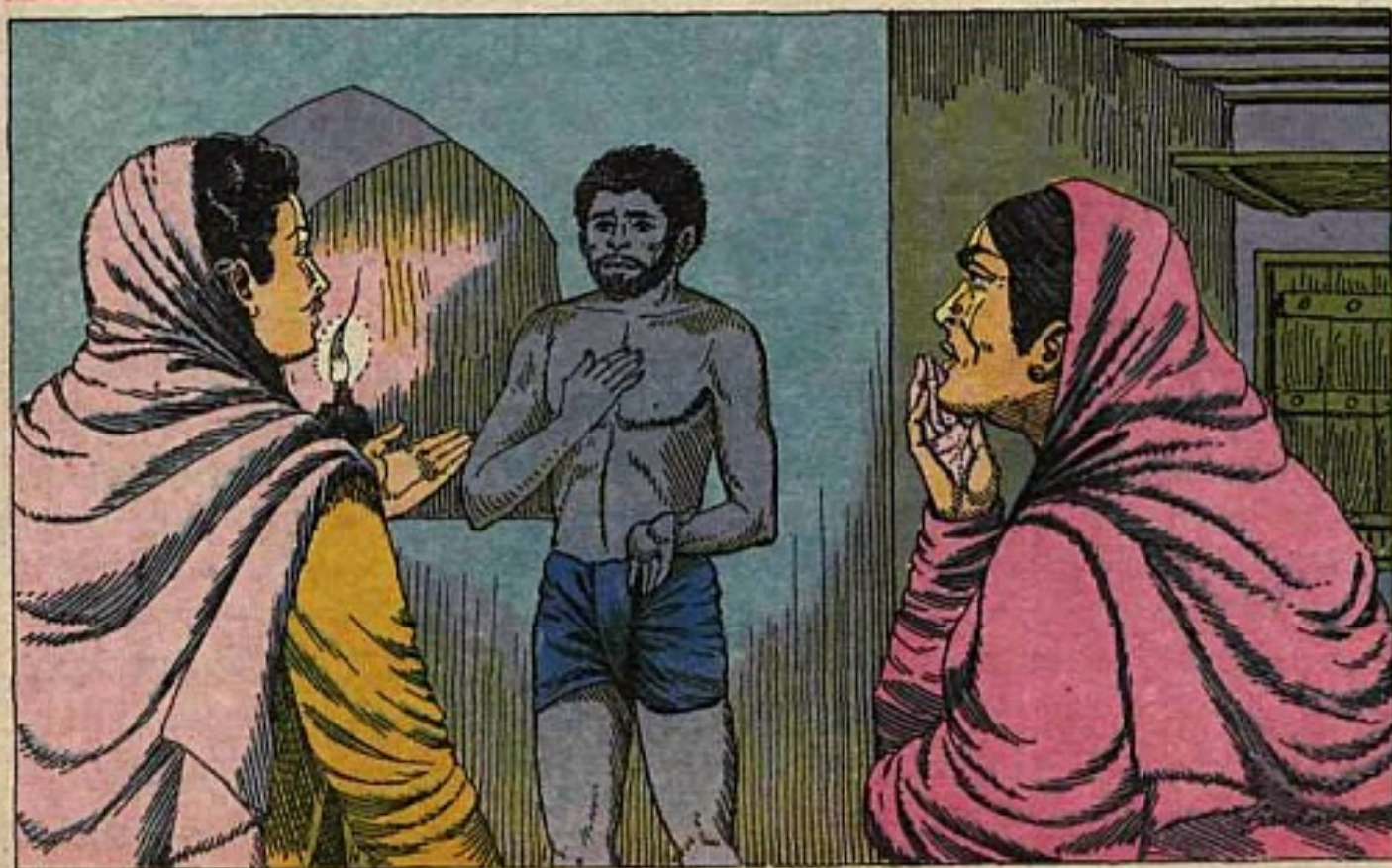
Gopal's complaint surprised

everyone.

"How is it that you suddenly began feeling the cold?" Charandas inquired into his strange behaviour.

"Sir, I was not aware of the cold till now because my hunger claimed all my attention. I had hardly eaten any food for the past three days and I was almost dying of hunger. In such a situation, how could I sit at home and think of the cold?" explained Gopal.

"But then," asked Janaki, "even after eating you went out into the freezing cold and milked the cows! How did you do that?"







“Mother, when you served me the hot food with so much love, I felt extremely grateful to you. Absorbed in my gratitude for you I was not aware of any external discomfort. So I could go and milk the cows even in this terrible cold,” explained Gopal.

“And now?” asked Charandas.

“Now that my hunger is satisfied and I have done something

in return for your kindness, I am conscious of cold. Now I need a little comfort. This is human nature, am I not right, sir?” asked the beggar.

“You’re right,” agreed Charandas.

Janaki gave Gopal her husband’s old clothes. Gopal slept in a corner of the house. He stayed on with the family as its helper.

### Exploring the Haunted House

It was a very dark night. The narrow lane was darker. But I had to rush to see a friend who had an accident. I forgot that I had to pass by a deserted house reputed to be haunted. I remembered it when I stood petrified, sure that the noise was made by unearthly beings. The chain to which Franky, my dog, was tied had fallen from my hand.

Suddenly Franky ran into the house. I stood rooted to the spot. After a few seconds I saw four or five cats bounding out of the house. There was no more shrieking. Amused, I resumed walking with my Franky.

—(Miss) Nooryana





## THE MAGIC CAP

**A**t the foot of the Blue hills was the village Birampur. Badari the fisherman belonged to that village. Every morning, he used to launch his small boat on the sea and spend the whole day catching fish. He returned home only by late evening.

One day, all of a sudden, the hull of his boat broke and Badari could not go for fishing. He decided to go to the nearby forest and get some strong trunk of a tree which he could use for building a new boat.

He walked into the forest; and he walked very far into it. And still, he could not find the right kind of tree. All on a sudden he saw that the forest had become very dark. He looked up and saw thick clouds. A storm was about to burst. He decided to return home immediately.

But Badari lost his way in the dense forest. He could hardly see things a few feet away from him. Soon, there was a cloud-burst and Badari felt nervous. He climbed up a tall tree. To his great relief, he saw at a distance a little light. He quickly climbed down the tree and ran in the direction of the light.

He knocked on the door. An old man opened it.

"Brother, I have lost my way in the forest. Can you give me shelter for this night?" asked Badari.

"Please come in. You are lucky to have found this house, for there is no other house within a radius of ten miles. In any case, you can rest here tonight," said the old man.

Badari saw in the house an old lady heating up some food. Without speaking a word either





to him or to the old man, she served them hot dishes. Then, after the good meal, the three retired.

But Badari could not sleep. He kept thinking: Why do these people live in such a remote and dangerous area? How do they get their food? From where do they get money for their living?

Soon enough, he saw the old man get up from his bed and approach stealthily towards a wooden box. He saw him open it and pull out of it a blue cap. He put it on his head and said, "The Royal Kitchen!" And, within a few seconds, the old man vanished!

A minute or two later, the old woman too did the same and she too vanished!

Badari was stunned. Then he grew curious to try out the magic on himself. He opened the box and found yet another blue cap lying inside. He put it on his head and said, "The Royal Kitchen!" within minutes he found himself in the kitchen of the king. He saw there the old couple stealing food and gold and silver vessels.

As soon as they saw Badari, the old couple shouted, "Blue Hill forest!"—and, they vanished once again.

Badari was only too happy to be alone. He fed himself on the royal dishes to his heart's content. Then, he drank a fragrant red liquor and immediately fell asleep.

In the morning, the king's cook found him still asleep. They splashed water on his face. Badari woke up with a start. The cooks pounced on him, tied his arms and dragged him to the king.

"Maharaj, here is the thief who has been stealing from our palace all these days." said the cooks.

For the past many months the



palace was being looted of food and valuable things every other day. The king had kept guards everywhere but the thief, as though invisible, managed to escape all the guards every time.

"A thief who seems to be a wizard is very dangerous for the kingdom. Tie him to a post and burn him on a pyre," ordered the king.

The guards dragged him to a public square and tied him to a big wooden post. Many people from the kingdom came to see the thief, for he had become almost a living legend.

The fire was lit and soon the flames rose high. Badari gave up all hopes of his life. Suddenly, he remembered the blue cap. He called the chief of the guards and said, "Sir, I've one last wish before I die. Please bring me my

blue cap. I love it very much and I would like to die wearing it."

The chief agreed to his last wish and gave him his blue cap. Badari wore it and said softly, "Birampur!" And, in a wink, Badari, along with the post, vanished.

Badari found himself at the edge of his village. When one of his village folk passed by he requested him to untie him. When asked why he was tied to the post, Badari replied, "I had gone to the forest to get a big log for my boat. After cutting and getting it ready I tied it to my bag so that I do not lose it on the way nor do I leave it behind even if I feel tired!"

"Oh! What a lovely post! And how clever of Badari!" praised the villagers who crowded around him.





## HUNTER OF THE HIGHLANDS

**One of Britain's most savage hunters is the wild cat, which stalks its prey in the mountains and glens of Scotland.**

**L**OFTY cliffs and lonely valleys in the Highlands of Scotland provide an ideal home for many native wild animals seldom seen elsewhere in the British Isles.

The vast desolate moors, rugged mountains and fast-flowing rivers and streams provide the conditions in which wild animals can go about their ways little molested by man.

The wild cat, for example, one of Britain's biggest and most savage of hunters, stalks its prey in the Highlands and nowhere else in the United Kingdom.

Once common throughout Britain, the wild cat gradually retreated north as civilisation moved forward.

In appearance, it is rather like a brownish-grey tabby, but the stripes are much fainter than those of the house cat. The wild cat is also bigger and heavier in build. Its most distinctive feature is its tail. This is bushy and does not taper to a point like a domestic cat's.

Its den is often inside a hollow log or tree or in the crevice of a rock.

Unlike the domestic cat, which can breed twice or more a year, the wild cat produces only one litter, usually in the spring. The three to six kittens grow quickly and, after about six months, are almost as big as their parents and quite capable of looking after themselves.

Wild cats are excellent hunters. They hunt singly, by day or night, and use the same methods as the domestic cat. After stalking their prey, they wait quietly and patiently for the right moment before pouncing and making a kill.

They feed mainly on hares, pigeons, game birds and other small birds. On one occasion, 26 wood mice were found in the stomach of one wild cat.

Although not very much bigger than a house cat, the wild cat has the savage disposition of a tiger.

It is always savage and ferocious to both man and beast, with snarling jaws and claws extended, ever ready to strike out at anything that moves.

This ferocity is most evident when the cat is stalking its prey. When its victim is within striking distance, the cat puts on tremendous speed to make the final leap on its doomed victim.

To get the food it needs, the wild cat hunts over a very wide territory. No regular runs are followed and the hunting ground must be constantly extended and changed.

It is rarely seen by man, except when it ranges over the deer moors in search of food. When its normal prey is scarce, it will catch fish by flicking them out of a river with its paws.

### Imposing Stature

One of the reasons for the cat's ability to survive in the harshness of the Scottish Highlands is its stature. Its legs are longer than those of the domestic cat, so that it stands higher. The head is more square and the fur more dense.

The tail, briefly mentioned earlier, is about a third of a metre long and much bushier and thicker than that of the domestic cat. It is marked with from four to six black rings and ends in a blunt, black tip.

All these features combine to produce a very beautiful creature. Nevertheless, it is very savage and there have been reports of it having attacked humans.

Wild cats are absolutely untamable. Even those caught as kittens never cease trying to scratch and bite the hand that feeds them. They must be kept in a cage at all times.

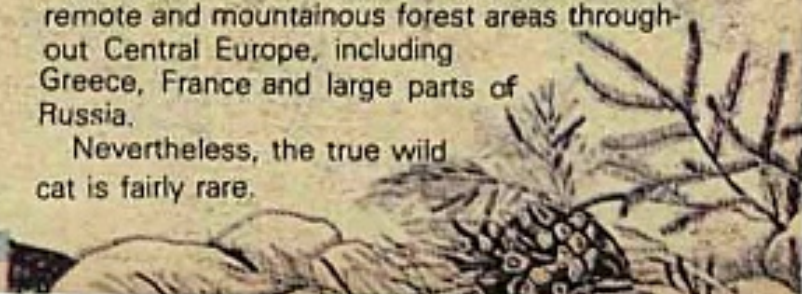
In fact, few serious attempts to tame them have been made. Recently, two young ones were raised in a town flat, but they required far more attention than domestic cats.

At one time, the wild cat was so relentlessly hunted by man, even in the deep fastness of the Highlands, that there was a real danger of it becoming extinct.

Now, however, the animal is welcomed in the Forestry Commission's plantations, as it plays an important part in controlling squirrels and other tree-damaging rodents.

In addition to Scotland, wild cats live in remote and mountainous forest areas throughout Central Europe, including Greece, France and large parts of Russia.

Nevertheless, the true wild cat is fairly rare.





However, numbers of domestic cats have gone astray and then settled down to a life in the wild. Although these are said to mate with the true wild cat, there are few records of this actually happening.

Once the wild cat was common all over Britain. Although it has long since retreated to the Highlands, specimens were occasionally

met with in the Lake District and in North Wales as late as the middle of the last century.

The family tree of the cat family can be traced back more than 40 million years. Once all cats were wild. Now, apart from the big cats, the only untamed survivor is the wild cat—*felis silvestris*—the proud lord of the mountains and moors of the Highlands of Scotland.





Characters from Indian Classics

# ALAMBUSA

A Nymph born as a Princess

**A**lambusa was a nymph in the court of Indra, the king of gods. One day she saw a gun-dharva named Vidhum. Both took to a liking for each other. "You should take birth as human beings and live as a couple," said Indra.

Thus Vidhum was born as a prince and Alambusa as a princess in two well-known royal families. They were known as Sahasranik and Mrigawati. Since they were destined to marry each other, the course of events brought them together

The date for their marriage was fixed.

Just then a war broke out between the gods and demons. Indra wanted some able human warriors to join him. He summoned Sahasranik.

Sahasranik fought courageously. The demons were defeated mostly because of his valour and generalship.

When he took leave of Indra, the latter asked the beautiful nymph Tilottama to keep him company till he reached his kingdom.





The two were in the chariot when Tilottama asked the hero a question. The hero was then absorbed in his thoughts on Princess Mrigawati and their impending marriage. He paid no attention to Tilottama's question. "Whoever has kept you unmindful of me will be separated from you—for fourteen years!" said the nymph, cursing the hero. Sahasranik did not hear her.

After Sahasranik was back in his kingdom, Kaushambi, he was duly married to Mrigawati. Days passed smoothly. But one day Mrigawati expressed a desire to bathe in a pond that must have red and fragrant water.

Accordingly the water of a pond was coloured and made fragrant. Queen Mrigawati was happy. But while she was bathing, a giant eagle swooped down upon her, mistaking the pond to be a pool of blood and mistaking the young queen to be a chunk of meat!

Up flew the bird, crossing layers of clouds and it continued to fly till it saw a high hill. It descended on it and released the queen and flew away.

The queen, who was then big with child, bemoaned her misfortune. A young hermit found her and led her to the Ashram of Sage Jamadagni. There she gave birth to a son, who was





named Udayan

The sage bestowed his warm affection on the queen and her infant child. As Udayan grew up, he taught him different subjects.

King Sahasranik felt himself as good as dead at the fate of his queen. However, his charioteer revealed to him all about Tilotama's curse. He could do nothing but wait for the period of fourteen years to be over.

One day the little prince Udayan saw a snake-charmer catching a charming snake. The snake was struggling to get away, but in vain. Udayan took pity on the creature. "Take this bangle and set the snake free,"

he told the snake-charmer. The snake-charmer was too happy to do that.

The precious bangle the boy passed on to the snake-charmer was his mother's. The snake-charmer, in trying to sell it in far-away Kaushambi, was arrested on suspicion of being a robber and produced before King Sahasranik.

The king was shocked and amazed at the sight of the bangle—for he recognised it at once. Led by the snake-charmer, he reached the hermitage of Sage Jamadagni and met his lost wife and the worthy son. They returned to Kaushambi, to great rejoicing of all.





A colorful illustration of King Vikram, a man with a mustache wearing a red tunic and a yellow shawl, carrying a dead body on his back. He is walking through a dark, spooky forest with gnarled trees and several skulls hanging from the branches. The ground is covered in grass and small plants. The artist's signature 'SANKAR' is visible in the bottom left corner of the illustration.

Tales of King Vikram  
and the Vampire

## THE MAGIC CHAIR

**D**ark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At intervals of thunderclaps and howling and moaning of jackals and hyenas could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning showed fearful faces.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulders, the vampire that possessed the corpse, said, "O King, I don't know at whose asking you're doing this unusual work. Are you sure he will grant you the favour you hope to receive? There are instances of people who do not grant favour when you need it but grant it when you have given up all hopes of getting it. Let me give you an example. Pay attention to my





narration. That might bring you some relief."

In a forest near the city of Mudrapur an old deserted temple collapsed. The king decided to build a new temple there. He ordered for the removing of the debris.

While the work of cleaning was going on, the workers discovered a tunnel. It led into an underground chamber. Inside the chamber was found a throne-like chair with some strange symbols drawn on it.

It was not difficult to understand whose chair that was. *Long ago there lived a tantrik in the temple campus. He had*

prepared a magic chair. If a man sat in it and wished some harm to befall on someone else, the man's wish was fulfilled. Of course one must fast for a day and do some other tantrik ritual in order to get the result.

It was believed that the tantrik ruined his enemies by the help of that chair.

Everybody knew the legend of the chair, but nobody knew whether the tantrik had destroyed the chair before his death or it was lying hidden somewhere.

The news of the discovery of the chair spread far and wide. The king placed it in one of the outer rooms of the palace. Hundreds of people filed past it.

But from time to time spectators had a fearful vision. They saw the apparition of the tantrik in the chair. Some of those who saw the apparition fainted.

Then there took place another incident. A fellow, perhaps a tantrik, suddenly broke away from the queue and sat down in the chair. He had to be removed forcibly. The fellow must have already harmed somebody.

These incidents obliged the king to stop the public exhibi-



tion of the chair. It was removed into an inner area of the palace and placed under guard.

Every day a pundit used to recite and explain scriptures to the king. The pundit, who hailed from a distant village, had lived in the city for many years.

One day a childhood friend of his named Lalit appeared before him. The pundit was happy to see him after twenty years and asked him what brought him to the city.

"My friend, I've come all the way to have a glimpse of the magic chair! Won't you help me to satisfy my desire?" said Lalit.

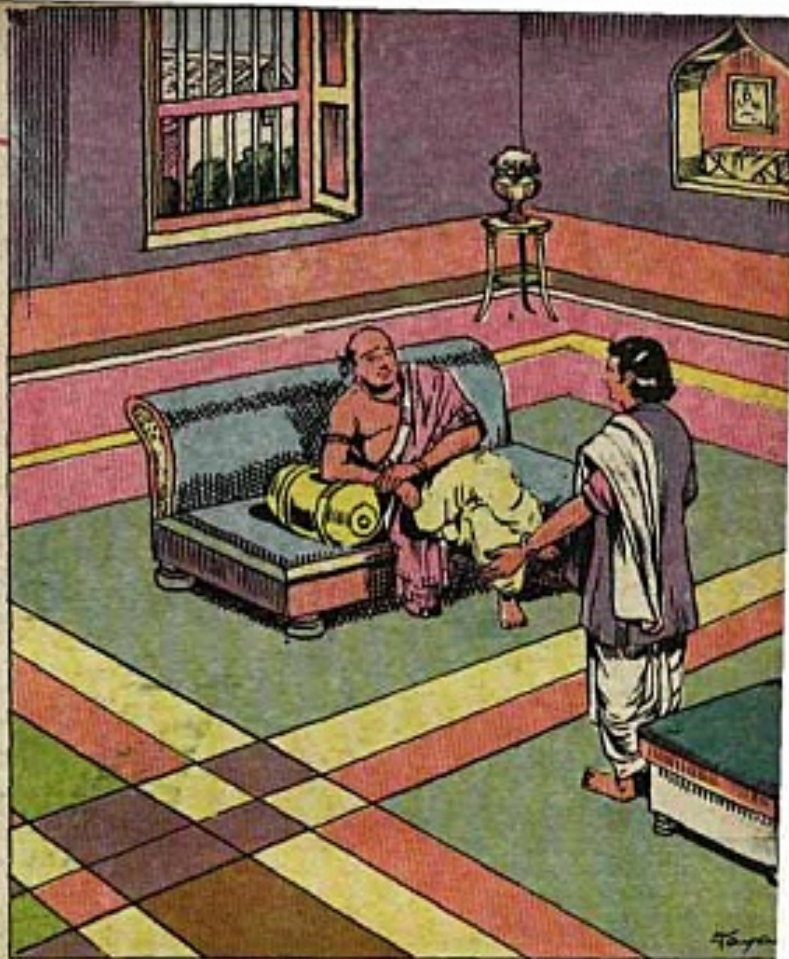
The pundit's brow was quenched. He passed a searching look on Lalit and said, "Lalit, the chair is no longer open to public view."

"I know that. But if you ask the king, he will let me see it," said Lalit.

"Sorry, Lalit, I don't have such an influence on the king that he will do what I ask him to do!"

Lalit sighed at the pundit's words and retired to his choultry.

But he was back at the pundit's house the next evening and said, "My friend, I passed the

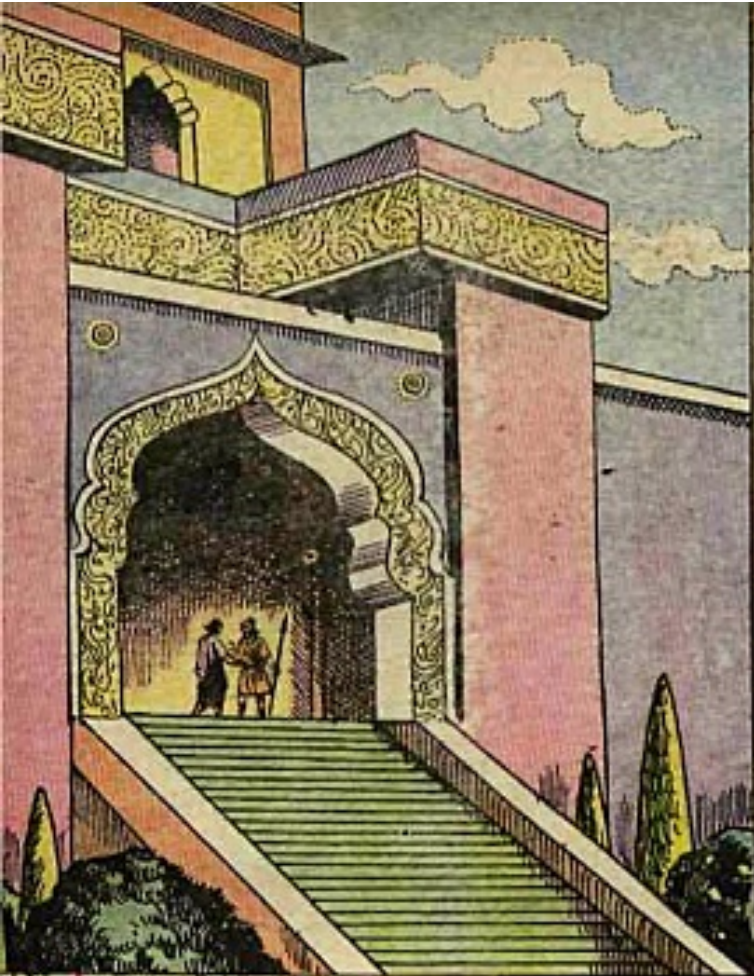


day loitering around the palace. Whoever heard that I was your friend, assured me that if you speak a word to the king, the king will gladly permit me to see the magic chair."

"Lalit, this is not true. Besides, I am much worried over the condition of a relative who has been possessed by a spirit," said the pundit.

Lalit went away, but he was back with the pundit the next day and said, "My friend, my mission is almost successful. To-day I met and befriended one of the two guards of the chamber in which the chair is kept. He has agreed to open the chamber





for a moment for me. But, as you know, the chamber is in the inner area of the palace. Nobody can enter that area unless accompanied by a confidant of the king. Will you not take me there with you?"

"Look here, Lalit, I'm much worried over the fact that somebody is trying to harm me through black magic. This is confidential. I tell you because you are my friend. I am in no mood to help you."

Lalit went away. Almost immediately the pundit went to the king and said, "My lord, those who are guarding the magic chair are not quite trustworthy.

I suspect that they open the chamber privately for the satisfaction of their friends."

The king instantly ordered for the transfer of those two guards to another section of the palace and placed the chamber under more strict supervision.

Next day Lalit was trying to enter the inner area of the palace through the courtesy of a courtier when his familiar guard saw him. "Sir, it is no use your going inside. I am no longer in charge of the chamber," the guard whispered to him.

Lalit was disappointed, but he did not give up hope. He proceeded to the minister's house and waited. As soon as the minister came out, he prostrated himself before him.

The minister was quite pleased. "What do you want?" he asked.

"Nothing, Sir. I came to town with two purposes. To show you respect was one of them. That fulfilled, I will now go back to my village though the second purpose of my visit remains unfulfilled," said Lalit.

"What was the second purpose of your visit?" asked the minister.

"To have a glimpse of the



magic chair. But I understand that it is not open to public."

"So what? Wait at the palace gate tomorrow morning. I will take you inside and show you the chair," said the minister.

Lalit was delighted. When he met the pundit that evening, he told him of the happy development.

"Very good," said the pundit gravely. That night the pundit and the minister happened to meet in the house of a common friend. They came to discuss the magic chair in the course of their chitchat.

"People are still so curious about it! A villager met me this morning and I understood that he had come all the way only to have a glimpse of the chair. The clever chap put it in a fine way, I appreciated his cunning and have promised to show it to him tomorrow."

"Show it at your own risk!" commented the pundit. The minister became grave.

Next day, Lalit met the minister at the palace gate. But the minister told him, "Sorry, it cannot be done!" Then, looking at a companion, he commented in a low tone, "The pundit says that there is a risk in it. Why



should I invite any problem?"

Lalit heard his comment. He stood stunned for a moment. Then he went to his choultry and collected his clothes and other things, ready to leave for his village. However, on his way he called on the pundit and said, "Good bye, friend, I am off to my village."

"I am so sorry that I did not have enough influence on the king to let you see the magic chair!" said the pundit.

"You had enough influence to stop me from seeing it!" rebuffed Lalit and he turned to go.

Lalit was crossing the gate when the pundit caught hold of





him by the arm and said, "Lalit, must you go away without spending any time with me? Please remain as my guest for a couple of days. And I am going to obtain the king's permission for you to see the magic chair today itself!"

Lalit rejoiced at the change in his friend's attitude. The pundit fed him sumptuously and led him to the palace. With the king's permission, he showed him the magic chair. Lalit was very happy. He spent yet another day in the pundit's house and then left for his village.

The vampire paused for a

moment and then asked King Vikram in a challenging tone: "O King, wasn't the pundit's conduct funny? Obviously he did not wish Lalit to see the magic chair. But, after avoiding him so many times, why did he change his mind suddenly? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your neck!"

Forthwith answered King Vikram: "No doubt, the pundit feared that Lalit had some motive in coming all the way. He suspected that Lalit wanted to sit in the chair and wish someone harm. He did not wish that Lalit should get a chance to do so through his help. He also did not wish the guards or the minister to let anybody have access to the dangerous chair. That is why he reported to the king against the guards and cautioned the minister. He wanted to ascertain whether Lalit had any knowledge of tantra. That explains why he spoke of a relative being possessed by a spirit and someone applying black magic on him. Had Lalit any knowledge of tantra, he would have at once offered to help his friend. Also, the pundit fed Lalit





sumptuously. If at all Lalit was fasting to make the magic chair work, the condition was broken.

"The pundit felt convinced that Lalit had no other motive other than satisfying his idle curiosity. Even then he would not have done anything for satisfying his idle curiosity. Had Lalit not remarked that because of the pundit's influence he lost the opportunity to see the magic chair? The pundit thought: In-

deed, Lalit could have seen the chair with the guard's or the minister's help. If the man was going back without seeing it, it was because of his intervention. Why should he be the cause of his friend's disappointment? That is why he took steps to satisfy Lalit."

No sooner had the king concluded his answer than the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.

### **World's Smallest Book**

There is an association called the Miniature Book International Club. Its members collect books which are remarkable for the smallness of their size.

The ex-President of this club, Dr. Martin Znidarsic of Yugoslavia has come to possess the world's smallest book of prayer that was published in Japan. It measures 1.4 mm by 1.4 mm.





## THE IMPRISONED NYMPH

**K**ishore was an orphan. He had been adopted by Jay Mishra, a singer who earned his livelihood as a shop-keeper.

But what the people did not know was, Jay Mishra had been a tantrik. That was years ago. He nursed a great ambition to become a musician. But, for some strange reason, he gave up singing altogether.

His veena was the sole memory of his days as a singer. Sometimes the old man would take the veena in his arms, but he would never played it. He would keep it back quietly, with tears rolling down his cheeks.

"Why don't you play the veena?" Kishore asked. "If I don't play it, you'll play it—and become the most celebrated musician in the kingdom," re-

plied the old man.

"Why don't you teach me how to play it?" Kishore would ask.

"You need not be taught anything. You'll just put your fingers on the strings and there will be music. But that will be possible only after I am dead. This veena will be the most valuable wealth you are going to inherit!" the old man would reply.

Kishore found Jay Mishra's words puzzling. But he kept quiet.

Days passed. Jay Mishra was on his death-bed. He called Kishore to his side and said, "It is time I tell you all. I applied my tantrik power and imprisoned a nymph in this veena. It is she who will play the veena when you lend your fingers to it.



That is to say, she will guide your fingers. The veena will produce such music which no human being can think of!"

"But I never saw you play!" observed Kishore with surprise.

"Before I had completely imprisoned the nymph, she cast a curse on me. If I ever played it, I shall become dumb and blind! Once imprisoned, she cannot curse. So, you are going to become the greatest musician. But remember one condition. Never play the instrument at midnight. If you do, she will escape."

Jay Mishra died soon thereafter. After his funeral rites were over, Kishore took up the veena. As soon as he put his fingers on the wires, wonderful music came out of it. At first he could not believe his own ears. Then he sat charmed, playing for long.

Then came the midnight. He picked up the veena once again and began playing it. There was a giggle and he saw the nymph outside the veena.

"Freedom, freedom at last!" said the nymph, breaking into tears. "But, young man, did you set me free by mistake?"

"No, I set you free deliberate-



ly. I would not like you to remain a prisoner," said Kishore.

"O, how noble of you!" said the nymph. She then disappeared.

Next day Kishore was idly running his fingers on the veena when he felt his fingers being led by some force and sweet music coming out of the veena.

"What is this?" asked Kishore as if to himself.

"I will be in the veena whenever you play. Now I will be here out of my own free will!" said the nymph.

No wonder that Kishore became famous as a veena-player.



# SHOOTING NOWHERE

Kumar was roaming about at the fringe of the forest. He seemed quite unmindful of the situation. It was late in the evening and darkness would envelop the forest soon.

Suddenly he found himself face to face with a hermit.

"Are you not aware of wild beasts living in this forest? How are you roaming here, unarmed?" asked the hermit.

"I don't care if a tiger drags me away!" said Kumar. "In fact, I wish that to happen!" There was anguish in his voice.

"Why have you grown so eager to become a dish for a tiger?"

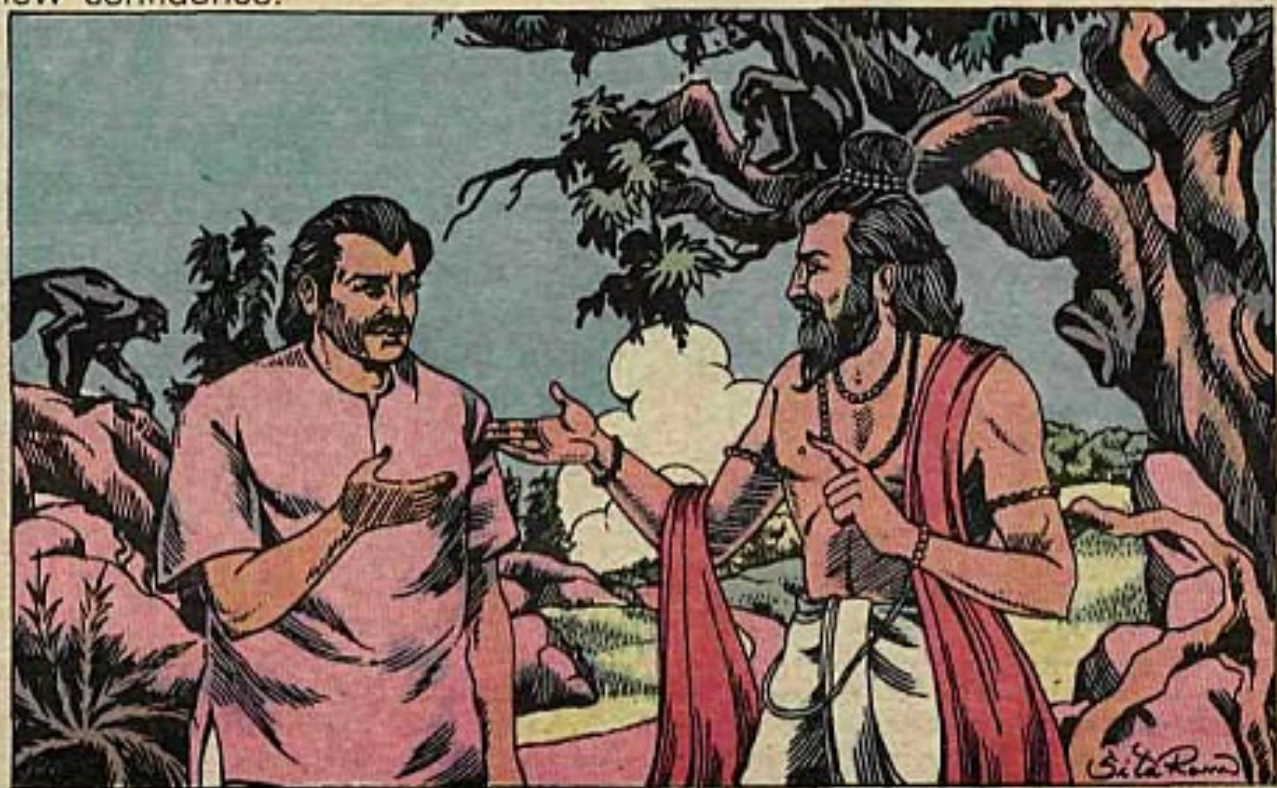
"Holy man! I could achieve nothing in life. One of my friends became a magistrate, another a famous writer, a third one became an astronomer, a fourth..."

"I'm not interested in that list. Will you tell what is it that you wanted to achieve, but failed to achieve?" asked the hermit.

"Well, sir, I could not achieve anything, could not become anything..." Kumar fumbled.

The hermit smiled. "My boy, you had set no goal before you. How then do you say that you did not achieve it? I know others too like you who never have a clear idea of what they propose to do, yet they lament that they did nothing! It is like an archer who shoots arrows without fixing any target complaining that he lost the target!" said the hermit.

That opened Kumar's eyes. He thanked the hermit and went home with a new confidence.







## ANIL'S SOUND MEMORY

**M**ore than a hundred years ago there was a zamindar named Vimal Chowdhury. His estate was quite large, so much so that people called him a Raja.

He had a son who was intelligent and smart, but who had developed the habit of speaking lies. Reason or no reason, the boy must speak a lie or two a day!

Chowdhury became quite worried about it. He hated lies and he was keen to see that the boy got over the habit. He decided to employ a good tutor for the boy who would teach him the usual lessons as well as the virtue of truthfulness.

His friends recommended Anil and Mahim to him. They told him that the two young men were brilliant teachers.

The zamindar summoned both the young men to his house. First he called Anil in and asked him, if he thought himself capable of teaching his son.

"Here is the stack of certificates I have received from important people who have known me at work. I am sure no other teacher in this province has so many credentials," said Anil, quite proudly.

"Have you read the Mahabharata?"

"Of course, I have sir!"

"Good. Do you remember Yudhisthira saying to Sahadeva that credentials of important people are the best proof of one's goodness?" asked the zamindar.

"Yes, sir, I remember it very well."



"You seem to have a sound memory! You may go. My manager will pay you your travel expenses. I will send word to you afterwards," said the zamindar. After Anil left, he called Mahim in.

"Mahim, are you capable of teaching my son?" he asked.

"Sir, I alone cannot do much. But yourself, myself and others have to create the right-atmosphere for the boy, give him confidence and try our best to see that he learns his lessons," humbly replied Mahim.

"Do you have any certificate?"

"I have, sir, some. Some kind people have issued them on their own. But I have not brought any with me."

"You of course know how in the Mahabharata Yudhishthira extols the virtue of certificates before Sahadeva!" said the zamindar.

Mahim hesitated for a moment and then said, "Sir, I have read the great epic, but I don't remember this incident."

"I see. Never mind that. You are appointed as my son's tutor. My manager will arrange for your stay and look after all your

necessities."

Mahim thanked the zamindar and went away.

The zamindar's diwan, who was a witness to both the interviews, asked him, "What made you decide in favour of Mahim, sir? He was neither sure of his capacity for teaching the boy, nor had he brought any credentials with him. His memory was not good enough to remember the incident in the epic to which you made a reference!"

"Mahim was true when he said that he alone cannot teach my boy. If the members of the family do not behave before a child as honest and kind people, no child can be really educated. Secondly, he did not bring credentials because he had faith in his own capacity. Thirdly, he could not remember the incident in the epic because no such incident ever took place! Anil, in his eagerness to impress me, spoke a lie when he said that he remembered what Yudhishthira told Sahadeva! How can a man, who can speak a lie so easily, teach my son to hate lies?" observed the zamindar.

The diwan appreciated his master's wisdom.





## TEMPLES OF INDIA

### KONARAK: SHRINE FOR THE SUN-GOD

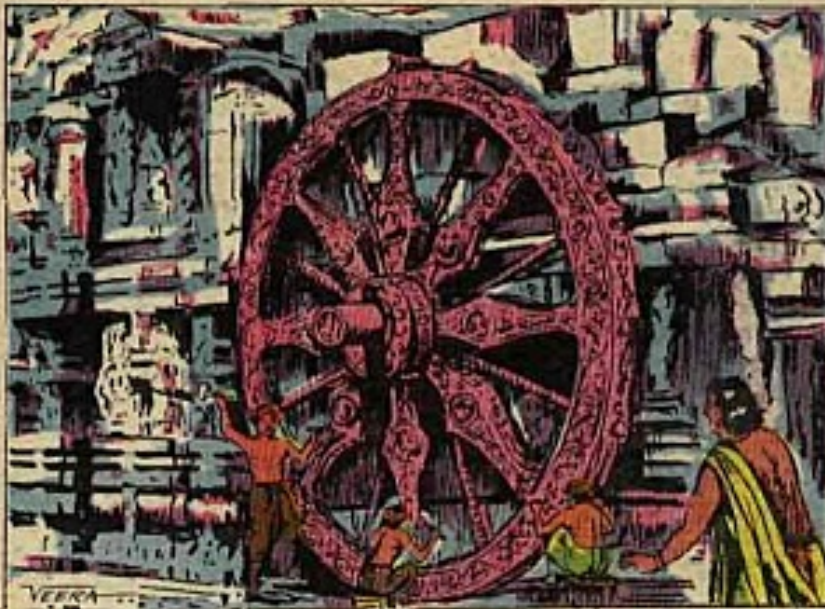
Since time immemorial Konarak on the sea, at the mouth of river Chandrabhaga, was a favourite place of the Sun-God. According to a Purana, Shamba, the son of Sri Krishna, spent some years there meditating on the Sun-God.

On a visit to the place, Narasimha Dev, the mighty king of Kalinga, was inspired to build a temple to the Sun-God there—a permanent tribute to the Deity. He summoned 12 hundred craftsmen, the best ones in his kingdom in his time—the 13th century.



The craftsmen were commanded by Bishu Moharana, a great engineer-cum-architect. Large-size rocks of a particular kind were brought from distant hills. Workers kept busy day and night, by shifts, to complete the temple which was to be unique for its architecture.





Beautiful motifs of art were to be carved on every inch of stone. The Mukhasala or the Gopuram was to look like the chariot of the Sun-God with massive wheels drawn by magnificent horses. The temple was open to the south-east in such a way that the sun could be reflected inside it throughout the year.

Twelve years passed. Bishu Moharana had left a little son far away in his village, named Dharmapada. The boy, in his teens, was pouring over his father's manuscripts on architecture and was eager to see his father at work. He pleaded with his mother to let him proceed to Konarak.



Dharmapada walked a long way alone and reached Konarak. The temple stood completed. Only its crown was to be set. Moharana's joy knew no bounds at meeting his only child. The boy stood awe-struck at the sight of the great temple and its great architect, his father.



Soon Dharmapada noticed a strange thing: Since the work was about to finish, the builders should look happy; but they all looked pensive. Why was it so? Dharmapada was told that the principle of setting the crown in the right way had been forgotten by the senior builders.



The impatient king had sent word that if the crown was not set by the next morning, he will put all the twelve hundred builders to death! Dharmapada climbed the temple and studied the position. The theories were fresh in his mind. He directed the work and the crown was set in the particular way necessary.

The craftsmen applauded Dharmapada's feat. Moharana was proud and delighted. But Dharmapada overheard some jealous fellows remarking that since one boy accomplished what twelve hundred failed to do, their prestige was imperilled! Dharmapada was shocked.

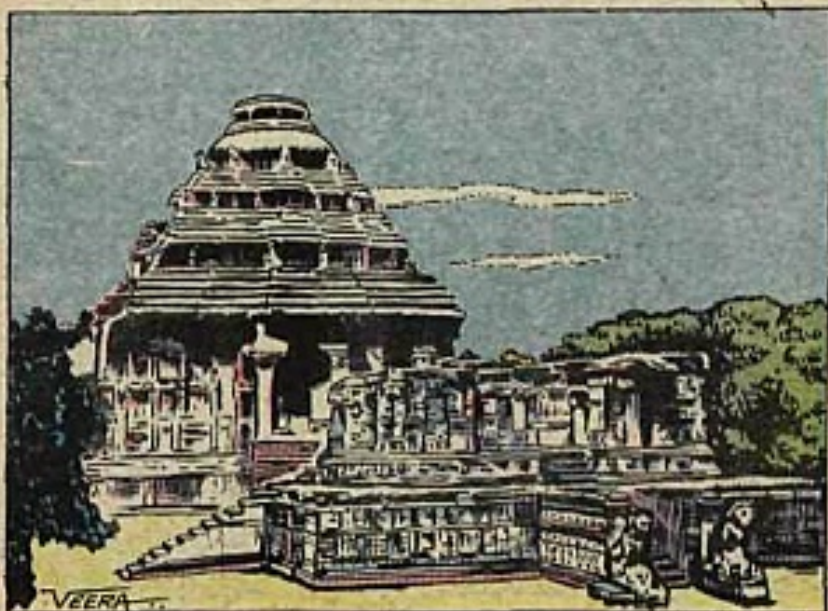






He thought on the issue. "It will be good if I disappeared from the scene. The fact that I did the work will never spread!" It was a full-moon night. He climbed to the temple-top at midnight. By then the tide in the sea and the river had brought their waters close to the temple. Dharmapada jumped to his death.

Ages have passed since. But Dharmapada, far from being forgotten, lives in legends. The main temple is no longer there. The Deity inside, if there was any, is also gone. But the images of the Sun-God on the wall of the Mukhasala are so beautiful that they have always aroused wonder.



The Mukhasala of the Konarak is a marvel of art, unique for the intricate designs and splendid beauty which mark each slab of stone. The river Chandrabhaga and the sea have receded from the shrine, but the place is still serene and beautiful.



## THE STRANGE RAINS

**R**amu and Bipin were friends. Ramu was intelligent and good-natured. Bipin was by no means bad, but he was a simpleton and a talkative fellow. He could never keep a secret. Ramu warned him against his habit again and again, over the years, but to no avail.

The two friends went to the kingdom of Rampur, looking for employment. They found work at two different places, but stayed together in a deserted building.

The building belonged to a landlord who was dead and who had left no heir. It was in ruins. The small portions which still had roofs over them were not safe. However, Ramu and Bipin took shelter there because they had no other place to go.

One night it rained heavily. There was also a cyclonic wind. Ramu and Bipin sat huddling in a corner of their room, feeling very unsafe.

Suddenly a stone pillar in front of their room collapsed. In







the lightning Ramu saw a box falling out. It had landed hidden in the pillar.

The rains subsided towards the dawn. Ramu drew the box into their room and broke it open. It contained gold coins.

"How lucky we are!" exclaimed Bipin.

"We should be lucky only if you hold your tongue. If you go on telling people about our find, we may have to lose this. According to our contract, we have to be in this town for a week more. Then we can go back and set up some business with this wealth for capital," said Ramu.

"Right. We should not leave this place right now. That may give rise to suspicion in the minds of others," observed Bipin like an intelligent man.

But he did not prove intelligent when he went to work. He was found to be smiling and laughing. "What's the matter with you? You seem very happy!" his colleagues remarked.

That was sufficient for Bipin to confide to his colleagues all about his wonderful luck!

"I hope, you have not disclosed this to anybody!" asked Ramu at night.

"Er-er-no-no-not at all!" replied Bipin.

From the manner of his talk Ramu knew that he had already spoken about it to some people. Perhaps before long he will also speak out where they had kept the box!

But Ramu did not say anything to Bipin then. When Bipin fell asleep, he carried the box to a field outside the town and buried it under a tree and returned to the deserted house quietly.

Next day he bought some luddos. At night he tiptoed out of the house once again. Along



the way he hung the sweetmeats to the branches of some trees. A river flowed by the road. Fishermen had set a net and a fish had been caught. Ramu took out the fish and put it inside a trap set near a vegetable field for jackals.

When he was back at the deserted house, the wind was growing violent. As he anticipated, rains came down. He woke up Bipin and said, "Let us remain alert. Who knows if another box of gold won't spring before us?"

"Who knows?" agreed Bipin.

But no pillar collapsed and no box came out.

"Bipin, there is another de-

serted house like this one on the other side of the king's palace. Let us pay a visit there. Maybe, we will find some wealth. Rains do strange things in this town!" proposed Ramu. Both were on the road soon.

"Look here, Bipin, rains have made this tree produce a lud-doo!" Ramu said, pointing at a sweatmeat hanging from the branch of a banyan tree."

"It is strange. Rains do miracles in this town!" observed Bipin.

Before long they discovered a dozen more luddos.

"Look here, Bipin, a fish was trying to be clever. It wanted to enter the vegetable field and eat







the cucumbers. But it is caught in the trap!" said Ramu.

"Indeed, the rains seem to turn a fish mad!"

As they passed by the palace they heard an owl screeching.

"The king's father-in-law is under attack from a ghost. It happens in rainy nights. Let's go back," said Ramu and he turned towards their lodge. Bipin followed him without a word.

Three or four days later one morning the king's guards surrounded their room inside the deserted house and caught hold of them.

"Where is the box with gold?" they demanded of the two

friends.

"What box with gold, gentlemen? asked Bipin.

"Don't try to fool us!" said the guards. They searched every part of the house but, of course, found nothing!

The two friends were led to the king.

"Look here, your friend has told his colleagues, in confidence, about your finding gold in that deserted house. How many boxes did you find?" the king asked Ramu with a menacing gesture.

"My lord, this friend of mine is crazy. He grows more so when it rains at night," replied Ramu.

The king understood that it will not be easy to elicit facts from Ramu. He turned to Bipin and demanded, "Tell me, how many boxes did you find?"

"Only one, my lord. We could have found another from another house, but we had to go back when we heard your father-in-law shrieking under a ghost's attack!"

"What?"

"My lord, that night the rains resulted in the trees bringing forth luddoos!"

The king now began to look



amazed. "What else did the rains do?" he asked.

"The rains emboldened a fish to walk up to a vegetable field to eat cucumbers. But..."

The king and his courtiers burst into peals of laughter. The king summoned his Chief Intelligence Officer. "You careless officer! Should you not check the information about people before hauling them out of their house? Of these, one is as innocent as a calf; the other is a crackpot. Must we harass such people who have come from neighbouring lands?"

The officer looked guilty.

Ramu and Bipin were

allowed to leave the court.

For the two more days they spent in the town, Bipin never spoke a word to anybody.

Then they set out for their village.

"Ramu, was there no truth in our finding any treasure? Was it a dream of mine? I'm puzzled," said Bipin.

"Follow me silently."

When they were outside the town, Ramu dug out the box, Bipin smiled. On reaching home they used the wealth as capital for a business. Bipin never did anything against Ramu's advice and Ramu was particular that Bipin was never deprived of his dues.





# FRAGRANCE OF FAITH AND LOVE

The king had taken ill. It took rather long for him to recover.

The day he came out to his court, leading members of the nobility came to greet him.

While the king was talking to them, a villager dashed in, followed by the angry durwan.

"My lord, this man gate-crashed before I could stop him. He was loitering before the gate for the last two days. How could have I suspected his intention?" said the durwan.

"My lord, I was waiting to see you. I'll go away in a moment, I come from Sudhapur, when I learnt of your illness, I promised to our deity, Mother Kali, that I will offer her Puja if you are cured. I did so. Here is the Prasad," said the man. He kept a closed bag before the king and hurried out.

The king opened the bag. There was the smell of some stale food.

The king took out his gold necklace and gave it to a bodyguard and said, "Run behind the man and give this to him."

"My lord, you are giving away your precious necklace for this foul-smelling stuff!" asked his jester.

"Not for the foul-smelling stuff, but for the fragrance of the man's faith and love," replied the king.





## A DOG IN A DOUBLET

"Grandpa, Rajesh is not sure why the principal should address him as *A dog in a doublet* when he did so well in sports!" Reena informed Grandpa Chowdhury.

"What is wrong with the principal saying so?" *A dog in the doublet* means a bold, resolute fellow! Rajesh surely deserved to be complimented by his principal!" said Grandpa, removing the uncertainty from the children's minds.

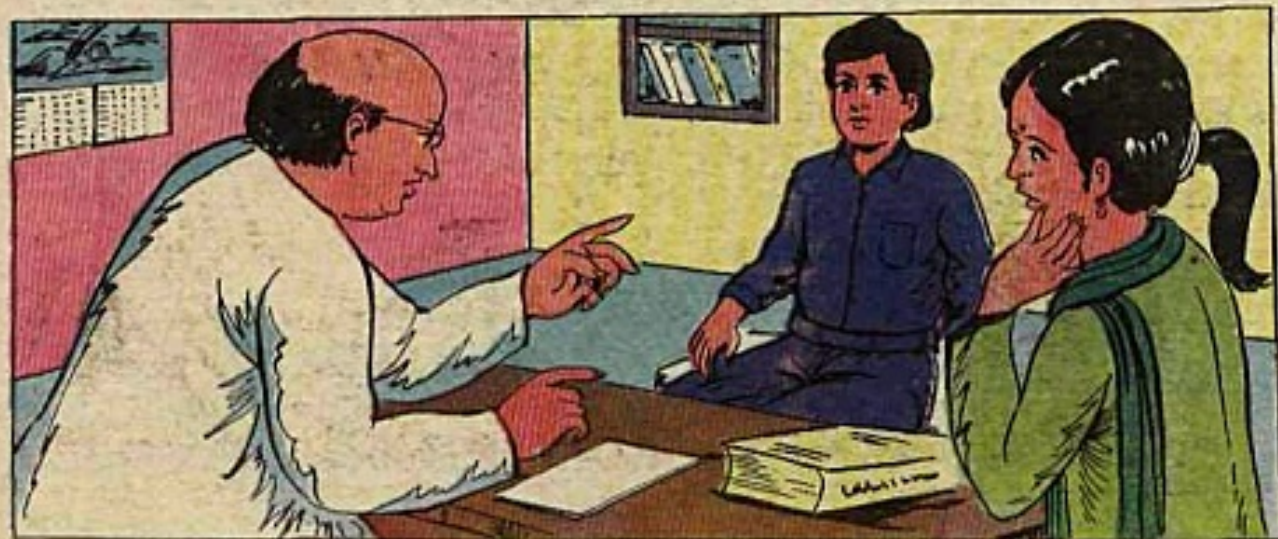
"Good God! Who would have thought of the dog to be a part of a phrase of tribute!" said Rajesh.

"In some European countries the strong dogs were dressed in a kind of doublet buttoned to their bodies when they went hunting the wild boar. Of course, a false friend is called *A dog in one's doublet*. But that is a different matter. Dog is not a derogatory term in the West as it is in India, though it seems to have enjoyed a different status in ancient India. Dharmaraja assumed the form of a dog and followed Yudhishthira in his last journey," said Grandpa.

"As you cited a number of phrases and proverbs featuring the horse the other day, it seems there are a number of phrases with the dog too! We know some like *Barking dogs seldom bite*, *Every dog has his day* and *Let sleeping dogs lie*. Are there more?" asked Reena.

"Many more. *To call off the dogs* means to discontinue an unpleasant dialogue or to desist from an inquiry the outcome of which may be useless or embarrassing. This comes from the huntsman calling off his dog if it went in the wrong direction. *To lead a dog's life* means to live without peace. *To put on the dog* is to behave in a conceited manner or like a snob. Well, we'll see more of the dog later."

"Very well, Grandpa."







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## PICKS FROM THE WISE

Good-nature and good-sense must ever join. To err in human, to forgive divine.

—Alexander Pope

A merely fallen enemy may rise again, but the reconciled one is truly vanquished.

—Schiller

We are never deceived; we deceive ourselves.

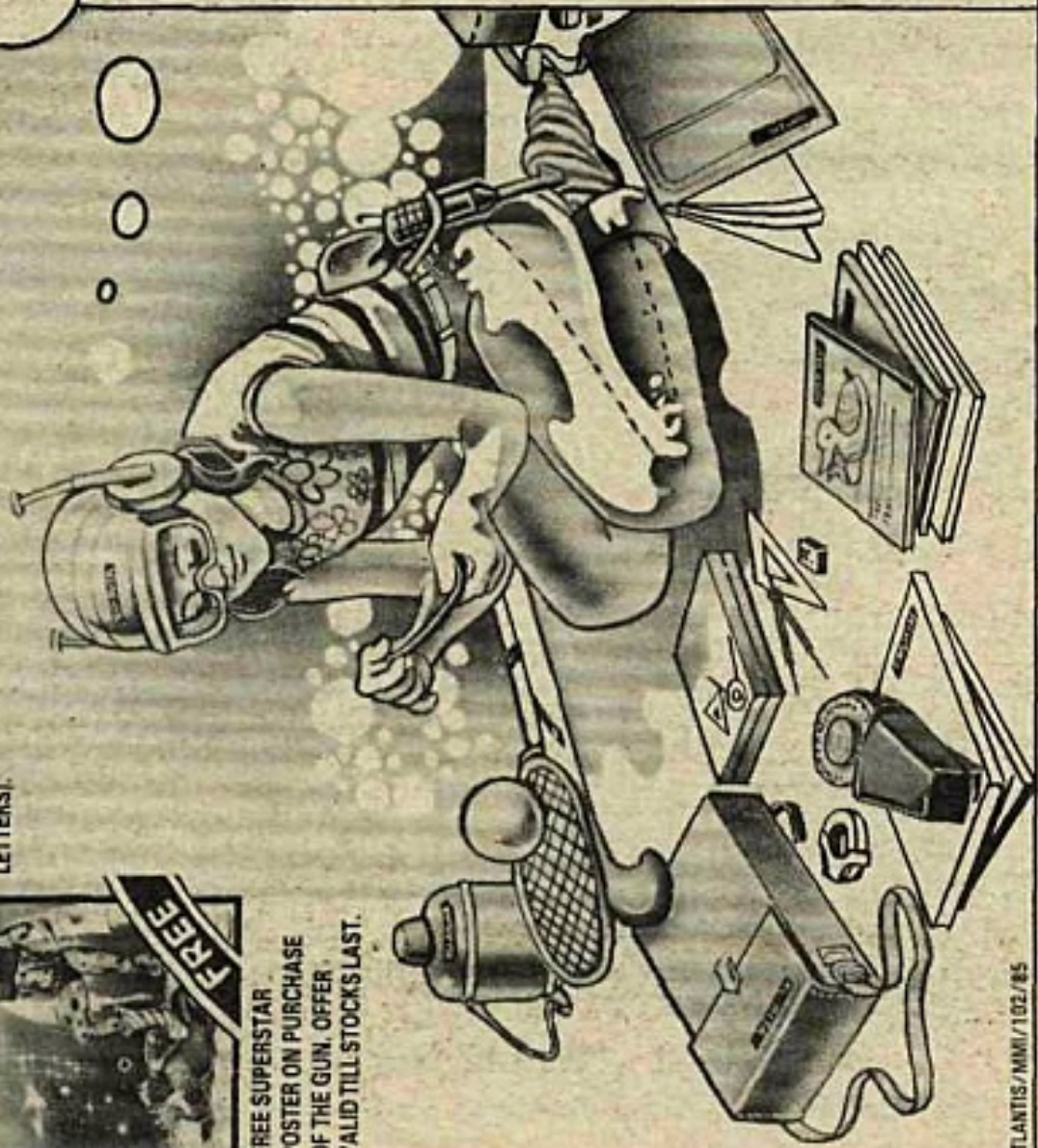
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## LET US KNOW

In *Chandamama* (August '85) you mentioned that a million millions make a billion. Is it not an old American calculation which is obsolete? Is it not a thousand millions that make a billion?

—Dr. T.V. Ranga Rao, Madras.

A million millions making a billion is not an old American calculation. This prevailed in Britain, France etc. since 1948. (see the latest edition of the *Chambers 20th Century Dictionary*.) They began meaning by a billion a thousand millions and "often now in Britain" they do the same. This is to put the issue in its right perspective. We thank the reader for bringing up the issue.

As a student of sociology, may I ask you to state what is real Indian culture?

—Jagdish Arora, Meerut.

It is not easy to define the Indian culture within this limited scope. The founding fathers of Indian civilisation, the Vedic and the Upanishadic Rishis, believed that our life's ultimate purpose is to realise God. For them God meant the ultimate Reality, the Truth and the Light. Quest after these goals is known as spirituality. This quest was evident in Indian literature, art, music and dance, the different aspects of culture. Hence we can say that the Indian culture is basically spiritual.

Who was the Guru of Shankaracharya?

—Hemant Kumar Pokhariyal, Delhi.

Govinda Bhagavatpada, the worthy disciple of a great Guru, Gandapada, was Shankaracharya's guide. The young seeker met him in a cave on the bank of the Narmada. According to another legend, he met him at Badarikashram.



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